

BEFORE

THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF

SOUTH CAROLINA

DOCKET NO. 95-1087-C - ORDER NO. 95-1589✓

OCTOBER 9, 1995

IN RE: Request of Steve Wash to be Allowed	)	ORDER
to Receive Local Service from Pond	)	DENYING
Branch Telephone Company instead of	)	REQUEST
United Telephone Company.	)	

This matter comes before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (the Commission) on the request of Steve Wash that he be allowed to receive local telephone service from Pond Branch Telephone Company, Inc. (Pond Branch) instead of United Telephone Company of the Carolinas (United).

On September 14, 1995, the Commission convened a public hearing regarding Mr. Wash's request in the Commission's hearing room at 111 Doctors Circle, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Rudolph Mitchell, Chairman, presided. Mr. Wash appeared pro se. William F. Austin, Esquire and James B. Wright, Esquire represented United; Margaret M. Fox, Esquire represented Pond Branch; and Florence P. Belser, Staff Counsel, represented the Commission Staff.

Mr. Wash testified that he currently receives local telephone service from United. Mr. Wash is a teacher at Batesburg-Leesville High School and is pursuing a Doctor of Education degree from Clemson University. Mr. Wash stated that his work and his continuing educational pursuits require that he have access to on-line computer services such as Prodigy, CompuServe, and America

OnLine. According to Mr. Wash, the on-line computer services have local access numbers in larger cities such as Greenville and Columbia. Mr. Wash offers that he could access these on-line computer services at lower cost if he was served by Pond Branch instead of United. Pond Branch's Area Plus Plan would allow Mr. Wash to access the computer service by using a local number instead of the more expensive long distance number.

Additionally, Mr. Wash explained that he has a Batesburg address but has a Saluda telephone number. Mr. Wash stated that this situation forces him to make long distance calls to speak with others in the same town as well as make long distance calls to neighbors who live less than two (2) miles away. Mr. Wash testified that his home is located on the edge of United's region and that he is approximately one-quarter (1/4) mile from Pond Branch's Ridge Exchange.

Donald Horton of United testified that while United does not provide area calling into Columbia or Greenville, United does provide extended area service among all of United exchanges in Saluda and Greenwood Counties. Mr. Horton also stated that United respects the exchange boundaries and offers that the integrity of those boundaries must be protected to prevent stranded investment.

L. B. Spearman, Pond Branch's Manager of Regulatory and External Affairs, testified that the nearest Pond Branch facilities to Mr. Wash's residence are approximately 3,186 feet. Mr. Spearman also testified that it would cost approximately ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for Pond Branch to serve Mr. Wash. Mr. Spearman stated that Pond Branch respects the boundaries and service areas

of adjoining companies but that Pond Branch would serve Mr. Wash if ordered to do so by the Commission.

Upon consideration of the record in this matter and the applicable law, the Commission concludes that the request of Mr. Wash to receive local telephone service from Pond Branch should be denied. While the Commission is sympathetic to Mr. Wash's situation, the Commission will not order Pond Branch to extend its facilities to serve a customer outside its approved service area at such great expense. The Commission believes that it is neither fair, nor is it in the public interest, for the customers of Pond Branch to be forced to subsidize the extension of facilities to serve someone outside of the approved service area. Therefore, the request of Mr. Wash to receive local service from Pond Branch is hereby denied.

This Order shall remain in full force and effect until further Order of the Commission.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

  
Chairman

ATTEST:

  
Executive Director

(SEAL)